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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/089,814	04/04/2002	Makoto Uchida	10059-413US (P26104-01)	5588

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AKIN GUMP STRAUSS HAUER & FELD L.L.P.
ONE COMMERCE SQUARE
2005 MARKET STREET, SUITE 2200
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

EXAMINER

MERCADO, JULIAN A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1745

DATE MAILED: 03/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/089,814

Applicant(s)

UCHIDA ET AL.

Examiner

Julian Mercado

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 January 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3 and 4 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on January 26, 2006 has been entered.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant's representative advised the examiner on March 13, 2006 that an Information Disclosure Statement is in the process of being mailed. In order to expedite the consideration of the references cited therein, the references are cited in the attached PTO Form-892.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and 103

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are

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such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Watanabe et al. (U.S. Pat. 5,728,485).

The rejection is maintained for the reasons of record. The 103(a) portion of the prior ground of rejection based on Watanabe et al. is not applied towards the present claims in that the term “dispersed differently” has been deleted. Thus, the present ground of rejection based on Watanabe et al. is an anticipation rejection under 102(b) for the detailed reasons of record and for the additional reasons not yet discussed in view of the present amendment. The examiner notes that independent claim 1 now positively recites the polymer electrolyte to have a first particle size and a second particle size. Watanabe et al. is maintained to teach a first particle size, i.e. a granular carbon support having a particle diameter of 100 to 1000 angstroms, and a second particle size, i.e. carbon particles having a length between 100 to 1000 angstroms and a diameter between 0.1 and 10 microns. See col. 6 lines 46-61. As to the first and second particle sizes of the first and second hydrogen conductive polymer electrolytes [being] different, it is maintained that the size of the solid polymer electrolyte which coats these particles would resultantly and inherently be different in size by virtue of the first particle being a substantially spherical particle and the second particle having a lengthwise dimension, e.g. a carbon fiber, absent of a showing by applicant that the claimed invention distinguishes over the reference. *In re Best*, 195 USPQ at 433, footnote 4 (CCPA 1977) and *In re Spada*, 15 USPQ 2d 1655 (Fed. Cir. 1990) By “different in size,” the examiner maintains that Watanabe et al. teaches this feature to the extent that the first and second particles are clearly different in shape and hence resultantly different in size based on these shapes.

Applicant's arguments have been fully considered, however they are not found persuasive. Applicant appears to distinguish the claimed electrolyte from the electrolyte-coated support catalysts disclosed by Watanabe et al., while also conceding that the electrolyte-coated support catalysts are different in size. (remarks on page 4) Indeed, the support catalysts are completely coated by the electrolyte. See col. 4 line 58-65. In reply, it is the examiner's position that the scope of the present claims does not preclude the electrolyte from an electrolyte-coated support catalyst as being readable on the claimed invention, especially in view of this electrolyte being different in size in correspondence with the support being different in size.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3 and 4 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The reasons for provisional allowance of claims 3 and 4 were set forth in the December 15, 2005 Advisory action.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Julian Mercado whose telephone number is (571) 272-1289. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick J. Ryan, can be reached on (571) 272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

jam


PATRICK JOSEPH RYAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER